THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Progress is as follows :—

(i) EXPORT PROMOTION INDUSTRIAL PARKS (EPIP SCHEME)

As on date the Government of India have approved proposals from eleven State Governments to set up EPIPs. These are of Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Kerala, U.P., Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat.

(ii) VISHAKHAPATNAM EXPORT PROCESSING ZONE (VEPZ)

The VEPZ has been operationalised with effect from 1-4-93 on completion of basic infrastructure facilities of the first phase covering an area of 163 acres. The total land area of the Zone is 360 acres. A total of 35 Nos. of plots for Gem and Jewellery and 38 Nos. for other industrial units have been developed in the first phase and construction of one SDF is in progress. Nine project proposals have been received so far for setting up units in the Zone, all of which have been approved.

(b) to (d) No problems have so far been reported by these State Governments in implementing the projects. These Schemes are progressing satisfactorily.

Foreign Newsprint Suppliers Hiking Prices of Newsprint

1766. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Commerce is aware that the foreign newsprint suppliers have hiked up the prices of newsprint all of a sudden, after Government decanalised the import of newsprint;

(b) whether it is a fact that the foreign newsprint manufacturers have appointed agents in India and the newspapers have to import the newsprint only through their agents;

(c) whether Government consider breaking this cartel which will not only affect the newspapers but also result in loss of foreign exchange; and

(d) whether Government will consider import of newsprint through State Trading Corporation?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Under the Current Export and Import Policy, import of newsprint by actual users is permitted on the basis of entitlement certificate issued by the Registrar of Newspaper of India. The eligible importers are free to source their newsprint supplies from foreign markets on best possible terms. Presently, there is no proposal under consideration to canalise the imports of Newsprint through S. T. C.

Import of Newsprint by STC

1767. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that STC is importing newsprint even after decanalisation of import of newsprint;

(b) if not, whether the STC will consider import of newsprint at a competitive rate for the medium and small newspapers; and

(c) what is the landed cost per ton and the rate at which STC sells newsprint to small and medium Newspapers?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Prior to 1-4-1992, STC had been the canalising agency for import of newsprint. However, w.e.f. 1-4-92, import of newsprint has been decanalised and STC is no longer a canalising agency for import of this commodity. Under the decanalised regime, actual users are allowed to import newsprint directly by themselves or through newsprint handling agents based on the entitlement certificates issued by the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) under the administrative control of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. As an agent of actual users, STC has contracted newsprint for import. About 22,000 MTs of newsprint were imported by STC during the year 1992-93 against which a quantity of 20,000 MTs had arrived during same year and the balance quantity of 2,000 MTs arrived during 1993-94. During the year 1993-94, STC had also imported 21,000 MTs (approx), newsprint from Russia against a specific licence issued by Directorate General of Foreign Trade for sale to the actual users against their valid certificates of entitlement.

(c) The weighted average landed cost and the weighed average sale price PMT of the standard newsprint imported by

STC during 1992-93 and 1993-94 are as follows :—

Year	Weighted average landed cost	Weighted average sale price
	Rs. PMT.	Rs. PMT.
1992-93 . . .	13,336	14,198
1993-94 . . .	13,241	15,389
1993-94 . . .	13,205	13,978*

*For standard newsprint imported from Russia.

Import by Soyabean Processing Industry

1768. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Soyabean processing industry has recently urged Government for a onetime import of one and a half million tonnes bean (Seed) for actual seed users only at zero duty rate ;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the prices of Soyabean in the international market had recently fallen due to bumper Soyabean crop in the U. S. A. ; and

(c) if so, what action Government had taken/propose to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There has been a slight fall in the prices of Soyabean (around 10%) during the first week of December, 1994 compared to the prices of the corresponding period of the last year. The fall in prices could mainly be attributed to the sharp fall in prices of Soyabean from US $ 225 per metric tonne in December, 1993 to US $ 187 per metric tonne at present.

(c) Under the current Export-Import Policy, the import of Soyabean Seed is canalised through the State Trading Corporation of India Ltd. and Hindustan Vegetable Oils Corporation Ltd., Presently, there is no proposal under consideration to decanalise the import of Soyabean Seeds.

Duty Exemption Entitlement Scheme

1769. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that several industrial importers are taking advantage of "Duty Exemption Entitlement Scheme";

(b) whether it is also a fact that these importers are importing raw material worth crores of rupees and exporting in lacs ;

(c) whether Government are aware that largely the bross, electronic components chemicals and high tension plastic importers are involved in such activities ;

(d) the number of defaulters so far apprehended and the punishment/fine imposed on them ; and

(e) whether Government propose to blacklist such importers and if not, the reasons thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) to (c) All eligible exporters, including those in the brass, electronic components, chemicals and plastic sectors can use the Duty Exemption Scheme subject to fulfillment of the provisions and conditions laid down in Export-Import Policy and Hand Book of Procedures 1992-97. All exports through Value Duty Exemption Scheme are with requisite value addition. Hence value of exports are always more than the value of imports.

(d) and (e) Investigations so far have not revealed large scale misuse of the value based advance licensing scheme. Action against suspected defaulters is taken under the provisions of the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992. This Act does not have a provision for blacklisting of importers. The details of action taken against the defaulting firms during the past 3 years are as fllows :

	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94
Number of firms on which fiscal penalty imposed . .	281	188	58
Number of firms debarred	304	132	47
Number of firms placed under abeyance . . .	67	88	2
Number of liucences cancelled	4	21	2

Boosting Exports of STC

1770. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the State Trading Corporation has contemplated any serious efforts during the past few months to give priority to exports with tie-ups on the production front ;